

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DRC-01 /065 W

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R 020753Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3123

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E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, RP

SUBJ: SIGNING OF LABOR CODE HIGHLIGHTS MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

REF: A) MANILA 5016; B) MANILA 5028

1. HIGHLIGHT OF MAY 1 LABOR DAY CELEBRATIONS WAS, AS EXPECTED, SIGNING OF LONG-PENDING LABOR CODE BY PRESIDENT WHO DESCRIBED IT AS "A CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AS WELL AS A BILL OF OBLIGATIONS FOR EVERY WORKINGMAN." PRINCIPAL PROVISIONS OF NEW LABOR CODE DEAL WITH INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF NLRC, REVAMPING OF WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION MACHINERY INCLUDING INCREASED BENEFITS, AND RESTRUCTURING OF LABOR MOVEMENT BY INDUSTRY AND REGION. PRESIDENT ALSO ANNOUNCED 6-MONTH TRANSITION PERIOD TO ALLOW FOR POSSIBLE NEEDED ADJUSTMENTS IN LABOR CODE. PRIOR TO PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, JOHNNY TAN READ LABOR DAY MANIFESTO OUTLINED IN REF. B.

2. DURING COURSE OF SPEECH, MARCOS ASSERTED PHILIPPINES' PROBABLY ONLY COUNTRY UNDER ALLEGED MARTIAL LAW WHICH ALLOWS AND ENCOURAGES TRADE UNIONISM AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. HE SAID HE WANTED ONLY ONE THING ON THIS HIS WEDDING ANNIVERSARY (MAY 1 COINCIDED WITH THE MARCOS' 20TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY): UNITY IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, PRESIDENT HAD EARLIER REDICULED PREMATURE FORMATION OF PNTUC (SEE REF. A) AND CALLED ONCE AGAIN ON LABOR LEADERS TO HAMMER OUT TRULY REPRESENTATIVE AND

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UNIFIED TRADE UNION CENTER. MARCOS HINTED GOVERNMENT MAY

OTHERWISE HAVE TO STEP IN. HE ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO
"DECLASSIFY" ILO'S RANIS REPORT ON COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOY-
MENT STRATEGY, WHICH HE PRAISED. MAIN THRUST OF REPORT
AIMED AT MOPPING UP ACUTE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT
THROUGH EMPHASIS ON LABOR-INTENSIVE EXPORT INDUSTRIES AND
DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE INDUSTRIES IN RURAL
AREAS.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES LABOR CODE DOES PROVIDE
NEEDED UPDATING OF LABOR LAWS WITHIN CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED
BY MARTIAL LAW. NO QUESTION THAT LABOR BY AND LARGE PLEASED
WITH NEW LABOR CODE, DESPITE CONTINUING BAN ON RIGHT TO
STRIKE, AND THAT PRESIDENT HAS MADE SOME POLITICAL POINTS
WITH TRADE UNION SECTOR.
SULLIVAN

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